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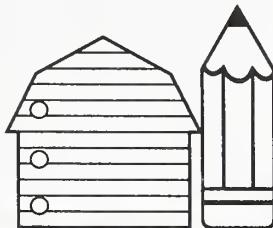
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Ag in the Classroom

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Notes

United States
Department of
Agriculture



A bi-monthly newsletter for the Agriculture in the Classroom Program. Sponsored by the U.S. Dept. of Agriculture to help students understand the important role of agriculture in the United States economy. For information, contact the AITC Director, Room 4307, South Bldg., USDA, Washington, D.C. 20250-0991. 202/720-7925.

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Pig Tales: Materials Show Where Pork Comes From

What do a crayon, a football, a bottle of glue, and a pork chop have in common? All come from pork. That is just one of the lessons included in *Where Pork Comes From*, a video-based teaching packet for kindergarten through fourth graders. The kit is the third in a series of educational tools developed by the Indiana Farm Bureau to teach students the farm to table story.

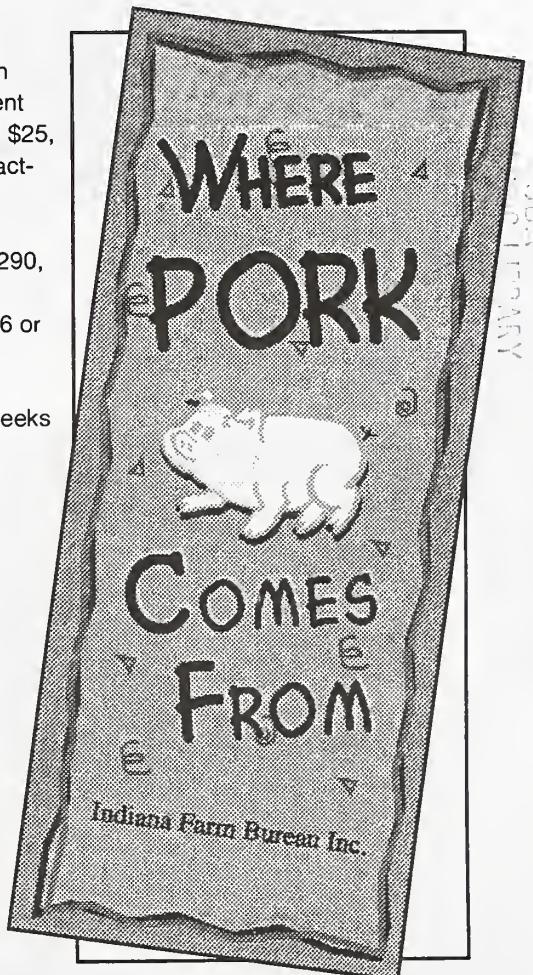
A fast-paced nine-minute video introduces four key ideas: pork producers care about the animals they raise; pork is leaner today and is part of a healthy, balanced diet; many other products come from pork; and many different industries and jobs rely on the pork production industry. Pork experts served as consultants during the development of the teaching guide.

In a lesson called "Pigs Are More than Meat," students learn many of the other uses for pork products—from drum heads and footballs to ball bearings and crayons, from fabric inks and dyes to bristle brushes and felt padding. Another lesson introduces some "just for fun" ideas, including grocery store tours, bulletin board suggestions, and even an "Adopt-a-Pig" project, that will enrich and enliven classroom instruction.

The kit can be used with other Ag in the Classroom materials. It can also stand alone as a lesson plan or instructional unit.

The complete kit includes the video, a binder, and the lesson plans, including student handouts. Single kits, \$25, are available by contacting the Indiana Farm Bureau, Women's Division, P.O. Box 1290, 225 S. East Street, Indianapolis, IN 46206 or call (317) 692-7830.

Please allow 6 to 8 weeks for delivery.



Where Pork Comes From, a multi-media teaching kit, teaches students the farm to table story

Agriscience Bus Tour Helps Teachers Develop Ag Literacy

Many AITC programs have discovered that teachers who begin incorporating agriculture into their curriculum typically learn as much as their students. In District 203, Naperville, Illinois, an annual Agriscience Bus Tour helps teachers understand the highly technical nature of today's agriculture—and the career options available to students as a result.

This year's two-day tour involved faculty members from elementary, middle, and high schools in the suburban Chicago school district. Participants visited some of Illinois' most technologically advanced facilities in food and horticulture development, production, processing, research, and science. They also visited Chicago's Board of Trade and spent the night in Chicago. At each stop, tour hosts explained the variety of jobs and career opportunities in agriscience and showed off the highly technical nature of the industry today.

Each participant also received a packet of curriculum resource materials, ranging from



classroom posters to career brochures to agriscience videos. "Because this area is becoming increasingly urban," says John Bushman, the district's agriscience coordinator and tour organizer, "it is important to help teachers understand the nature of today's agriculture."

Comments from teachers indicate that the Agriscience Bus Tours are meeting their goal. "The program has greatly enhanced my understanding of modern agriculture and the place of technology in it," one wrote. Another observed, "I related 'ag' to farmers and grain elevators and was totally ignorant about the industry surrounding agriculture."

In the past five years, more than 180 teachers, science specialists, and administrators from Naperville have taken part in the program, which is sponsored by the Illinois Pork Producers Association. Next year, the tour will be available to educators throughout the county.



A two-day summer bus tour is helping Illinois teachers learn more about agriscience.

Spotlight

“Roots and Shoots” Create Intergenerational Garden

An unused field outside Waddell Elementary School in Lexington, Virginia, is growing vegetables, flowers, herbs—and plenty of community support. It's all part of a program known as Roots and Shoots.

“The roots are the older volunteers and the shoots are the children,” explains Molly Brown, a volunteer who initiated the program at the school. “The main purpose is to give the children an opportunity to connect with the natural world of the garden with all of its mysteries and excitement while, all along the way, children and volunteers work together.”

Brown was one of the originators of the program more than a decade ago in Palo Alto, California. When she moved to Virginia, she brought the program with her. This year, she plans to set up a pen pal program between young gardeners in California and those in Virginia.

The program links small groups of second grade students (Shoots) with older community volunteers (Roots). Together, these garden friends take part in a weekly series of science lessons. A typical lesson plan includes information on a specific topic—germination, the difference between seeds and bulbs, the importance of earthworms. There is always a hands-on activity for students, a Bug of the Week, Bed Checks for planting, weeding, and watering, garden stories, and finally a garden song.

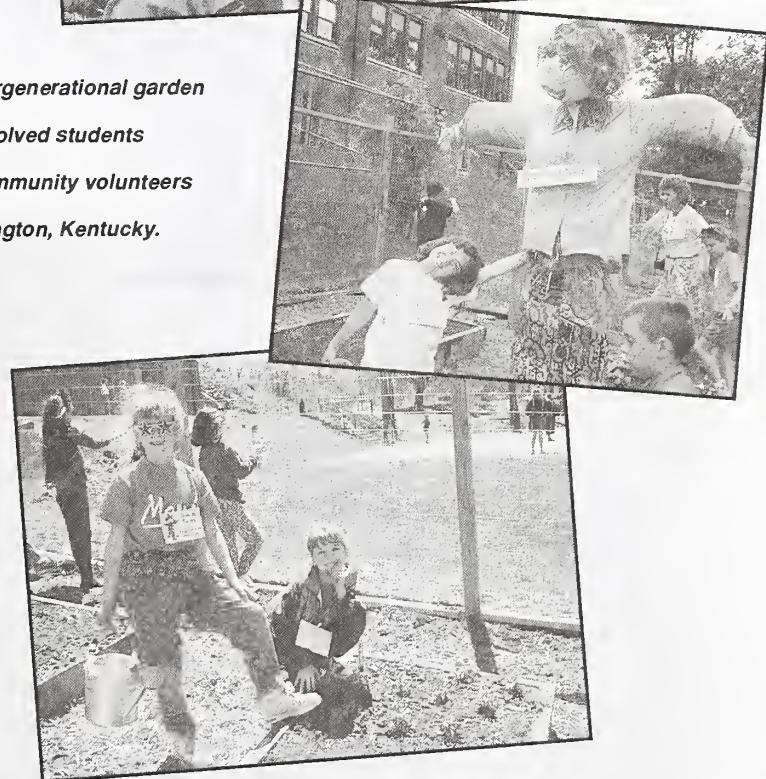
Special activities keep interest high. An early May Planting Day Parade included banners, posters, and worm puppets. The Harvest Party, held the last week of school, allowed students to take home a bag of salad greens—the first crop from their garden.

The 12 raised beds allow students at various grade levels to tie gardening into their curriculum. The herbs that fourth graders plant as part of their unit on Thomas Jefferson are harvested by fifth graders to make a colonial tussy-mussy. Other special features include a greenbean hideout, scarecrows, garden benches, compost bins, and an arbor for climbing nasturtiums.

The garden received the 1995 Youth Garden Grant award from the National Gardening Association. A local architect created an architectural rendering of the garden and a sculptor created a beautiful wooden gate at the entrance. “The program is a link between young and old, between the community and the school,” Brown concludes. For more information, contact Molly Brown at 306 Overhill Drive, Lexington, VA 24450, 540-463-6454.



*An intergenerational garden
has involved students
and community volunteers
in Lexington, Kentucky.*



Talented Brothers Design Montana Bumper Stickers

Each year, Agriculture in Montana Schools (AMS), Montana's Ag in the Classroom program, sponsors a bumper sticker contest. Students from across the state are invited to create a bumper sticker promoting the importance of agriculture. The winning bumper stickers are made available throughout the state.

This year's winners included a pair of talented brothers. Brian Williams, a third grader from Broadus, chose the theme "Hats Off to Agriculture." His sixth-grade brother Michael drew a young goat and added the slogan, "No kidding—Agriculture is #1."

"We've had siblings win in different years," says Marie Hovland, AMS president. "But this was the first year that two family members had won at the same time."

The boys come by their awareness of ag in the classroom naturally. Their father, a teacher, has used AMS materials in his classroom.

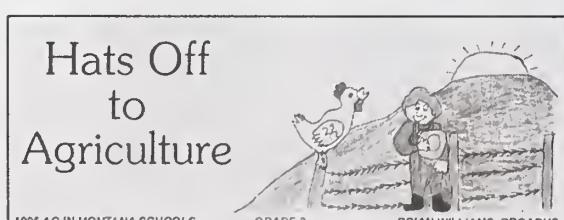
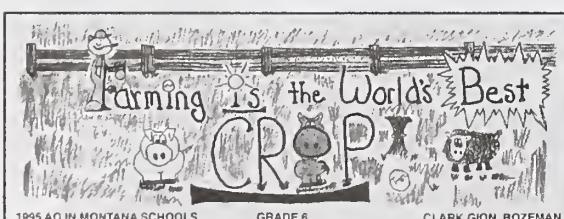
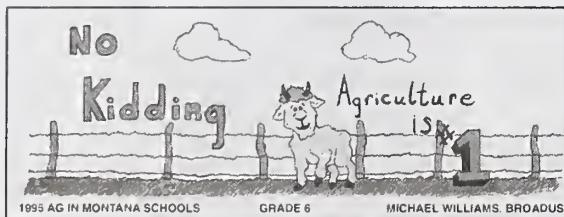
All the winners and their families were invited to the state capital to meet with legislators and have their picture taken with Governor Marc Racicot. As part of the celebration, the students, families, and legislators were treated to a meal that included rack of lamb, baron of beef, roast pork, salad, rolls,

dessert, drinks, and ice cream, all donated by various ag organizations and commodity groups. AMS asked legislators to contribute the cost that farmers would receive for the products—an astonishingly low \$2.57.

Each of the eight K-6 winners in the bumper stickers contest received a \$50 savings bond, 100 professionally printed bumper stickers of their own design, an award certificate, and a bag of goodies from ag organizations.



Brian and Michael Williams, shown with Governor Marc Racicot, were two of the winners in Montana's bumper sticker contest



New Materials Give Students "Just the Facts"

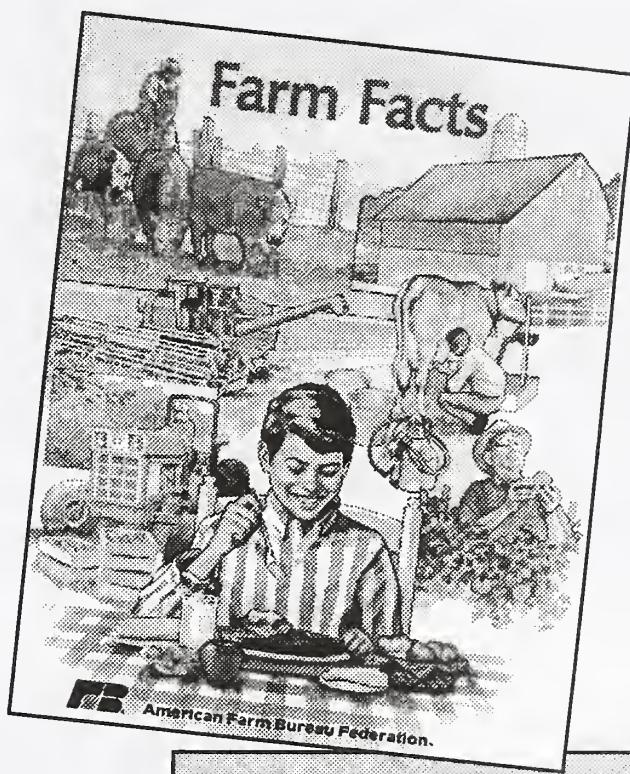
Taking a tip from Dragnet's Sergeant Joe Friday, the American Farm Bureau Federation has developed two new teaching kits that give students "just the facts" about agriculture. Farm Facts lessons for grades 4-6 and 7-12 include a wealth of statistical information about America's food and fiber system.

Whether students want to learn what one acre of land can produce (28,800 pounds of navel oranges, 45,500 pounds of strawberries, or 1,328 pounds of cotton) or the typical per capita consumption of agricultural commodities (Americans eat 51 pounds of poultry and 234 eggs per year), the answers are contained in one of the charts in the four-color Farm Facts booklet. A four-color poster, "America the Bountiful," shows students the geographic origins of various agricultural commodities.

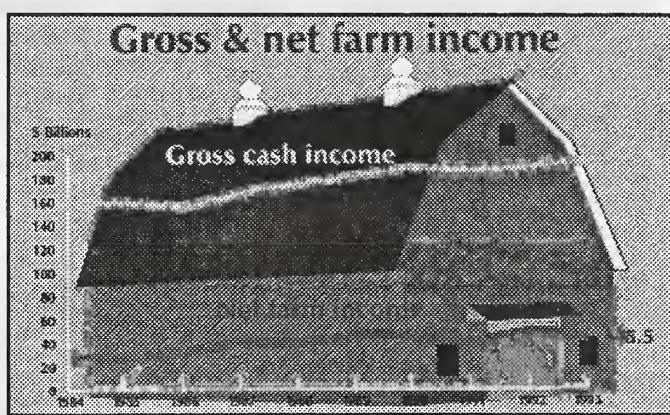
Accompanying lesson plans help teachers and students make sense of the statistical information. The elementary school lessons teach students how to use and analyze statistical information—lessons they can use in math, social studies, and English. The high school lessons could be incorporated into economics, math, history, and vocational agriculture classes.

Copies of the Farm Facts lesson plans with and booklet (specify 4-6 or 7-12) are \$6.50 each, including shipping, for single copies. Three or more copies are \$5.25 each including shipping. A set of

color transparencies of the charts is available for \$15. Contact the American Farm Bureau, Information Division, 225 Touhy Avenue, Park Ridge, IL 60068. You may call (312) 399-5858 or fax your order to (312) 399-5950.



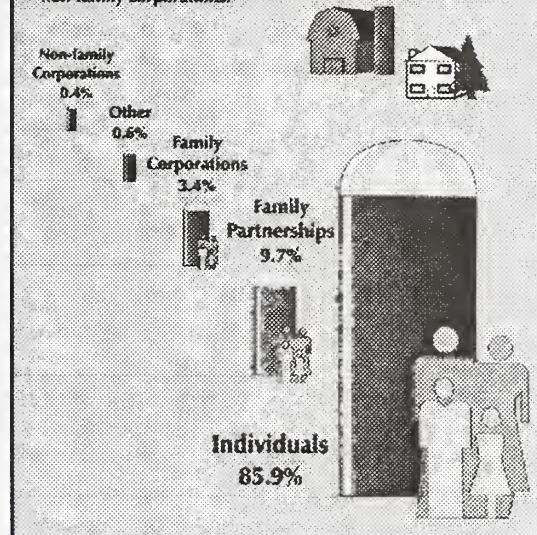
Farm Facts gives students facts and statistics about our food and fiber system



Source: Agriculture Outlook

Farming is still a family affair

Today, 99 percent of U.S. farms are owned by individuals, family partnerships or corporations with fewer than 10 stockholders. Only 0.4 percent of farms are owned by non-family corporations.



Just in Time for Halloween, Two Pumpkin Books

Two books about pumpkins can help elementary teachers capitalize on their students' interest in pumpkins. *Pumpkin Pumpkin* by Jeanne Titherington tells the story of Jamie, who planted a pumpkin seed.



Two books will help teachers and children learn more about the wonderful world of pumpkins.

Even the youngest children can follow the progress of Jamie's seed as it germinates and grows: "The pumpkin seed grew a pumpkin sprout, the pumpkin sprout grew a pumpkin plant, the pumpkin plant grew a pumpkin flower, and the pumpkin flower grew a pumpkin."

Jamie's pumpkin grows and grows and by autumn it is big enough to make a perfect jack-o'-lantern for Halloween. Best of all, inside Jamie's pumpkin were more seeds for planting next spring.

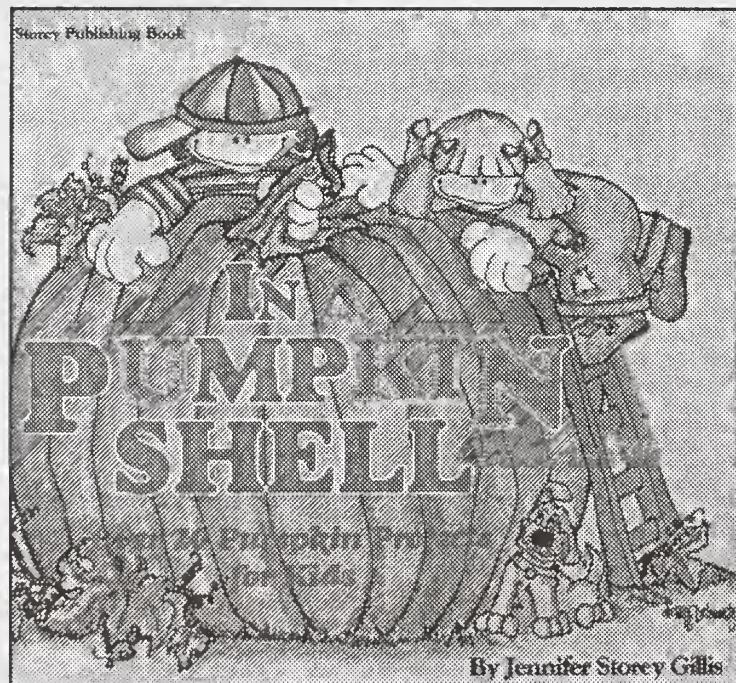
The simple text and the subtle colored pencil illustrations make this a book that children will study and think about. Published by Mulberry Books, 105 Madison Avenue, New York, NY 10016, the cost is \$3.95 (softcover). ISBN 0-688-09930-0.

In a Pumpkin Shell, by Jennifer Storey Gillis, includes more than 20 pumpkin projects. Many are easily adaptable for classroom use; others could be done by parents and children at home.

The book's three sections are "Be a Pumpkin Gardener," "Be a Pumpkin Artist," and "Be a Pumpkin Cook." From interesting pumpkin facts to directions on making a pumpkin into a musical instrument to a recipe for (what else) pumpkin pie,

the book helps kids realize that pumpkins aren't just for jack-o'-lanterns.

In a Pumpkin Shell, published by Storey Communications, Pownal, Vermont 05261, is \$8.95 (softcover). ISBN 0-88266-771-8.



South of the Border, Olé!



For today's students to be successful in tomorrow's workplace, they need not only knowledge but also the skills of critical thinking, self-management, and entrepreneurship. At the high school level, economics is ideally suited to help students develop these skills—especially the economics of agriculture.

Wanda Calloway, a teacher from Bartow, Florida, designed an economics unit to help her students understand more about the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) on specific agricultural commodities. The resulting

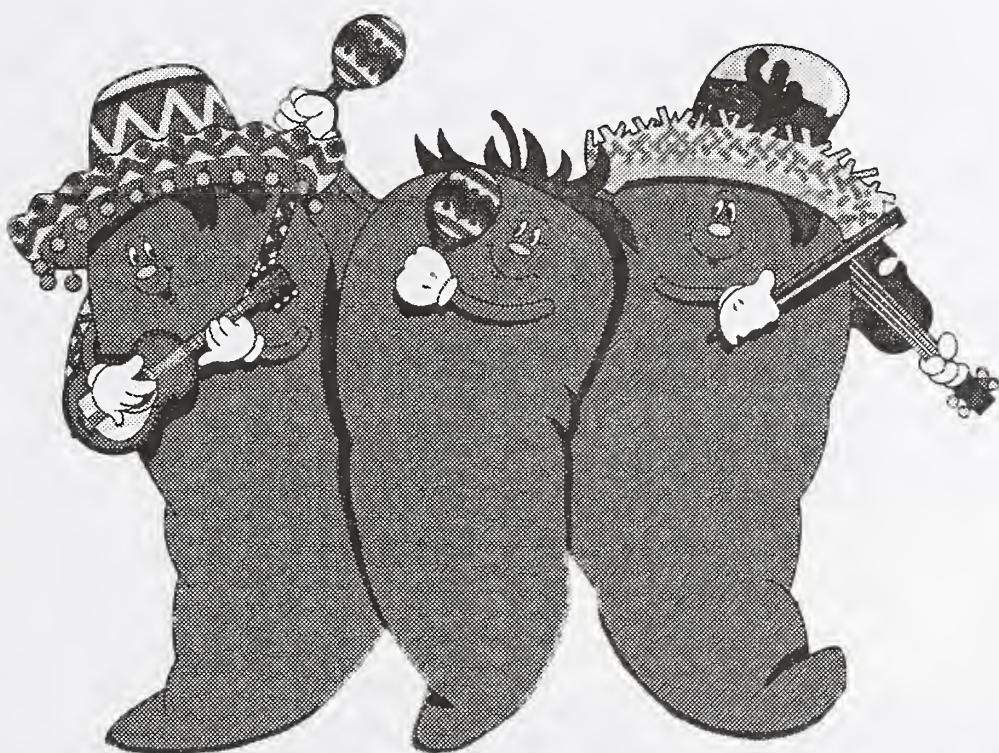
lessons, which she called *South of the Border, Olé!* were presented at the AITC National Conference in the summer and are now available to other interested teachers.

The project's goals include helping students understand economic principles of scarcity, choices, trade-offs, and opportunities. It hypothesizes that the central skill of economics is decision-making and provides students with several different, hands-on ways to make decisions—cost-benefit analysis, supply and demand curves, and the CAPSTONE process.

Students also learn why nations trade, debate the arguments for and against free trade, and study how the formation of regional trading blocs created a need for NAFTA.

Cooperative learning is an important teaching technique of *South of the Border, Olé!* As students work together, they are developing the teamwork skills that employers say is so essential to success in today's workplace. As a culminating activity, however, they develop an individual research paper on a topic that interests them.

South of the Border, Olé! is available for \$5 from Wanda J. Calloway, 3102 Meadow Lane, Bartow, FL 33830. If you prefer, an Apple/Macintosh disk is available for the same handling charge.



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